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SUBJECT Road Classification and Seasonal Characteristics

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1. Q. How does the Ukrainian SSR classify its roads? What are the seasonal characteristics of the various road types?

- A. The roads in the Ukrainian SSR as well as in the entire USSR were classified in five general categories before 1941:

- A. The highest or best type which are roads with good hard surfaces of asphalt or guidronized (a coal oil surface). These compare with highways or auto strata. The Russian term for them is "Vyssh".
- B. The "white" roads which have hard surfaces of compacted, crushed rock, or are paved with cobblestones or macadam;
- C. The gravel roads and improved natural roads;
- D. The natural dirt roads or "black" roads (Chornadroga) which are somewhat improved;
- E. The natural dirt or "black" roads which are totally unimproved. This is the most common road in the USSR.

2. Soviet roads are further classified for administrative purposes as those of all-Soviet Union importance (Obscha Souios Snachanye - about 10% of the roads of the USSR) which are equivalent to US Federal Highways, and those of Republican local importance (Republic Local Snachanye) which are equivalent to state or municipal roads. Roads of all-Soviet Union importance are administered by the State Roads Board (Gosoudarstvennoye Doroshnoye Upriavlenye) of the MVD. The Local-Republican roads are administered by the Republican Roads Board.

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- 2 -

3. The Ukrainian natural roads are characterized by very poor travel conditions. During spring and fall the natural roads are impassable and offer a very serious obstacle to the development of local transportation, especially in the rural regions. Winter snows hinder all transportation, both on highways and on natural roads, since there is very little snow removal equipment. The dust clouds thrown up by automobiles traveling on the natural roads in the summer are a constant nuisance. In 1931 the "Bolshaya Soviet Encyclopedia" asserted that the road network was the "weakest point" of the Soviet economic system.

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